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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
75th STREET CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
*MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER*

PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, June 9, 2011  
6:00 p.m.  
First Corinthian Missionary  
Baptist Church  
7500 South Halsted Street  
Chicago, Illinois

Reported by: Donna T. Wadlington, CSR

1 MS. WAHL: Hello. I'm Gretchen Wahl  
2 with Jacobs Engineering.

3 Hello, everyone. Can you hear  
4 me?

5 I'm Gretchen Wahl of Jacobs  
6 Engineering, Project Community Relations  
7 Specialist, and whenever we have a meeting like  
8 this we like to start with a safety minute. So  
9 I want you all to take a minute to look around  
10 and notice there are exits here and here and  
11 here and here.

12 And if you need to evacuate  
13 the building, we will all meet in the parking  
14 lot across the street, and that's where we will  
15 make sure that everyone got out okay.

16 Is there anyone here who might  
17 have a hard time getting out quickly, if we  
18 needed to get out quickly?

19 (No response.)

20 MS. WAHL: Okay.

21 Everyone here who knows CPR  
22 please raise your hands.

1 (Show of hands.)

2 Thank you. I want to take a  
3 note of that. I think we are in a good  
4 situation.

5 If anything happens, I will  
6 call 911 and my backup will be Doug Knuth and  
7 now that we have had our safety minute -- oh,  
8 first of all, does anyone have any questions?

9 (No response.)

10 All right. I would like to  
11 turn it over to Pastor Thomas.

12 PASTOR THOMAS: Amen. Since we're in  
13 the church, we know that we want to start with a  
14 prayer.

15 RESPONSE: Amen.

16 PASTOR THOMAS: All right. Shall we  
17 pray.

18 (WHEREUPON, Pastor Thomas led  
19 a prayer.)

20 MS. BOYD: Thank you, Pastor Thomas.

21 Hi everybody. My name is  
22 Marva Boyd. I'm the Acting Chief of Staff with

1 the Illinois Department of Transportation, and  
2 I'm here to extend a very warm welcome to all of  
3 you and I'd like to thank each and every one of  
4 you for coming out today. We're especially  
5 pleased that we have had a good turnout of  
6 people that are concerned citizens and community  
7 leaders.

8 I just want to say a few brief  
9 things about the 75th Street Corridor  
10 Improvement Project. It's a part of the Chicago  
11 Region Environment and Transportation Efficiency  
12 Program, or CREATE as we call it, which is a  
13 region-wide initiative to improve Chicago's rail  
14 infrastructure and basically to eliminate  
15 congestion in the Chicago area.

16 And it also happens to be one  
17 of Illinois' largest and most important  
18 projects. This project is important because it  
19 will help move rail passengers, freight and  
20 vehicles through your community more  
21 efficiently. This project is not just about the  
22 railroads though. It's really about the

1 neighborhoods. It's about your neighborhoods.  
2 In fact, what this is going to mean for your  
3 neighborhoods is improved mobility, less  
4 congestion, better passenger rail service and  
5 enhanced safety. And I think that all of those  
6 issues are things that all of you are concerned  
7 about, as are the partners that are here today.

8 And I want to underscore the  
9 fact that we are all partners in this effort and  
10 that we strongly encourage you to share your  
11 ideas, to voice your concerns, express your  
12 questions, and we are here to hear them and to  
13 listen to you. We are committed to hearing you  
14 out and then we're going to get your input into  
15 this project and that's the whole purpose of  
16 this meeting.

17 So, basically, what I really  
18 want to say is that together we will develop  
19 solutions for this project that align with your  
20 community's values and concerns.

21 The presentation that you will  
22 see today is going to provide you with

1 additional information about the purpose of the  
2 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, the  
3 needs that the project will address and the ways  
4 for you to get involved.

5 If you have any questions,  
6 please jot them down on the comment cards. I  
7 think they are going to be passed around later  
8 on. At the end of the presentation, we will go  
9 through those questions one by one. We will not  
10 leave here until all of your questions have been  
11 addressed. Okay.

12 After the presentation -- I'm  
13 sorry. At this time I would like to introduce  
14 Jakita Trotter, who's a member of the CREATE  
15 project team.

16 And, once again, thank you all  
17 for coming and please share your concerns with  
18 us. I give you Jakita.

19 MS. TROTTER: Thank you, Marva.

20 Well, I'm here to welcome you  
21 and thank you, as everyone before myself have  
22 done so.

1 My name is Jakita Trotter, and  
2 I'm with the Illinois Department of  
3 Transportation, part of the CREATE 75th Street  
4 Corridor Improvement Project, and I welcome you  
5 today.

6 At this time I want to thank  
7 Reverend James Thomas for use of his space to  
8 have the public meeting this evening. Other  
9 acknowledgments that I would like to do is give  
10 a call out to Belinda Franklin who is from  
11 Alderman Latasha Thomas' office, the 17th Ward  
12 office, and also Keevin Woods who is the Chief  
13 of Staff with Alderman Thomas. Thank you for  
14 coming.

15 Well, we are going to get  
16 started. Before we begin the PowerPoint  
17 presentation, I want you to be sure to jot down  
18 any questions that you may have during the  
19 presentation. They will be collected. As Marva  
20 said, they will be collected after the  
21 presentation. We will consolidate them, and  
22 also then ask questions of two of the key

1 project members that will respond.

2 So, make sure everyone has a  
3 card. If you don't, please raise your hand.  
4 Okay. Very good.

5 I'm going to take the time now  
6 to introduce two of the key project team  
7 members, and that would be Mr. Larry Wilson with  
8 the Illinois Department of Transportation. He's  
9 the CREATE Program Section Chief. And Doug  
10 Knuth who is with Jacobs Engineering. He is the  
11 CREATE 75th Street Corridor Improvement Manager.

12 Doug.

13 MR. KNUTH: Thank you.

14 Probably some of you, maybe  
15 many of you, have seen the presentation already.  
16 We want to run through it again, and if you've  
17 seen it already, it's going to be somewhat  
18 familiar, so that will be a really good time to  
19 write down questions.

20 And if you've got questions,  
21 hold up your completed card, and we will go  
22 around and pick them up.



1                   And then Carlos Nelson who  
2 is -- there you are -- will be facilitating that  
3 by interrogating us with your questions.

4                   So we will start with the  
5 presentation, and we will be back up in a few  
6 minutes. But fill out those question cards.

7                   (WHEREUPON, the video  
8 presentation was played.)

9                   MS. TROTTER: We are now at the point  
10 of the program where the question and answer  
11 will soon begin. Some of the project team  
12 members will be collecting cards from you.  
13 Raise your hands if you have cards to be  
14 collected, please.

15                   And I also would like to take  
16 this moment to acknowledge another distinguished  
17 guest that's in our audience and that's  
18 Representative Mary Flowers.

19                   And I would like to also ask  
20 Mr. Keevin Woods to come up and say a few words  
21 on behalf of Alderman Thomas' office, please.

22                   MR. WOODS: Thank you, Jakita.

1                   Before I begin, would you all  
2 join me in giving Pastor Thomas and all of our  
3 representatives a warm 17th welcome.

4                   (Applause.)

5                   While you're at it, give  
6 yourselves a warm round of applause as well for  
7 coming out.

8                   (Applause.)

9                   On behalf of Alderman Latasha  
10 Thomas, who is the Alderman of the mighty 17th  
11 Ward, she sends her sorry regret that she could  
12 not make it tonight, and the reason being her  
13 son is graduating from high school. He has  
14 received a full scholarship to New York  
15 University.

16                   (Applause.)

17                   And as you know, when one  
18 becomes a public servant, there is a lot  
19 expected of them, and there's a lot that you do  
20 that you negate family sometimes. So this was  
21 so important she had to be there for her son.

22                   A lot of things has been said

1 tonight. I don't want to be redundant, but this  
2 is an important and critical time with this  
3 project in the 17th Ward, and this is a time for  
4 all of the 17th Ward residents to become  
5 engaged.

6 This meeting is all about you  
7 and the Alderman wanted to make sure there was  
8 true transparency and it was not total autonomy  
9 on her behalf as her -- serving as your servant.

10 And so make sure that those of  
11 you who have not seen the exhibit -- it's a  
12 beautiful exhibit next door -- make sure that  
13 you see it. If you haven't seen it, to apprise  
14 yourself of what this project is all about.

15 And, again, we want to make  
16 sure that you know what's going on and please  
17 lend your comments, your ideas, your thoughts,  
18 whether it's negative or positive, we need to  
19 know your every thought as we move forward with  
20 this project.

21 Thank you so much once again  
22 for coming out. Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. TROTTER: Well, now it's Carlos  
3 Nelson that I would like to introduce. Everyone  
4 here should know Carlos. He is the Executive  
5 Director of the Greater Auburn-Gresham  
6 Development Corporation and a tireless community  
7 leader and activist. I can't say anything but  
8 good stuff about him.

9 Carlos will be doing the  
10 question and answer session. He will be  
11 facilitating that. He graciously volunteered  
12 for us, by the way. He's not on IDOT's payroll.  
13 So, Carlos, thank you.

14 MR. NELSON: All right. Thank you,  
15 Jakita.

16 She always has nice things to  
17 say, so I'm glad some of you guys don't have  
18 microphones. I am sure there are some other  
19 things to say about me.

20 So here's the part where we  
21 get to ask some questions and I implore you,  
22 whether you are a 17th Ward resident or a 21st

1 Ward resident. Anybody -- any other 21st Ward  
2 residents?

3 (Show of hands.)

4 MR. NELSON: All right, good. 18th  
5 Ward residents.

6 (Show of hands.)

7 MR. NELSON: All right.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 19th Ward.

9 MR. NELSON: Pardon me?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 19th Ward.

11 MR. NELSON: 19th Ward as well. Okay,  
12 great.

13 Here is an opportunity for you  
14 to ask the questions, the hard questions. You  
15 have a panel of experts here, many of which have  
16 been around for quite some time. I made an off  
17 color joke before -- I won't go there this  
18 time -- regarding the age of these experts.

19 But really, for you -- you  
20 guys haven't been around. Certainly Alderman  
21 Thomas. You've heard this acronym CREATE.  
22 You've heard about this project CREATE for quite

1 some time. So a lot of this should be something  
2 familiar to you. Hopefully, we have as many  
3 Englewood residents, which are right on the  
4 other side of this train track, as we do  
5 Auburn-Gresham or North Beverly or even Ashburn  
6 residents.

7 So -- and as you hear some of  
8 these questions and answers, and if it kind of  
9 ignites some other questions that you may have,  
10 just hold up your hand and ask for another card  
11 and keep on writing. I think we have probably,  
12 what, 40 minutes or so of Q&A. So feel free to  
13 keep it flowing.

14 Before that I just want to  
15 acknowledge again Pastor Thomas from First  
16 Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church. You talk  
17 about a community organizer. This gentleman  
18 right here in the shadows of the train track  
19 really is and has been for quite some time.

20 In fact, if you get a chance  
21 check out this board, which represents a project  
22 that he is funding out of his heart that he is

1 initiating called the Wiley C. Cozi Educational  
2 Center and Banquet Hall, which will be phase one  
3 directly across the street, phase two adjacent  
4 to that and phase three right next door. So if  
5 you get a chance, take a look at this.

6 So, question number 1. This  
7 is why -- I used to be able to read it like  
8 this.

9 All right. How long will it  
10 be for the project to start, and where will it  
11 begin? Very good question. How long will it  
12 take for the project to start and where will it  
13 begin? Doug Knuth.

14 MR. KNUTH: This is a fairly long  
15 process. And for those of you who aren't  
16 familiar with these sort of projects, it's  
17 sometimes surprising how long it takes.

18 This study we expect to  
19 have our record of decision, which means it's  
20 approved by the Feds early in 2013. At that  
21 point there is final engineering plans to be  
22 done before construction starts. So some

1 construction can start as early as 2014, if  
2 there's funding, and that really becomes the big  
3 issue is getting the funding, especially for  
4 construction.

5 You know, at this point in a  
6 project, it's typically not funded because it's  
7 not sure what we are building yet, so there  
8 won't be funding for it.

9 But the approval of the  
10 project is really the start of getting that  
11 funding going in earnest. So it could start as  
12 early as 2014, 2015, depending on the funding.

13 As to where it would start, we  
14 need to look at a variety of issues about which  
15 parts get built first and that's coming in over  
16 this next year. We have to look at which  
17 part -- building which part first will make the  
18 construction more effective, less expensive,  
19 etc. So I can't answer that one yet, but that  
20 will be coming at future dates.

21 MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

22 Is there a way -- can we put



1 the timeline back up? There was another  
2 question regarding maintenance. Okay.

3 So even though the project,  
4 the construction project won't begin right away,  
5 there is a question about maintaining the  
6 property. For instance, when or can the weeds  
7 be cut down even now prior to the project  
8 commencing? Larry Wilson, IDOT.

9 MR. WILSON: Okay. The question that  
10 I heard was can we start doing something about  
11 the appearance of the railroad properties before  
12 the project begins, and that's a good question.

13 That requires a couple of  
14 things. It requires railroad initiative,  
15 railroad willingness, and it may require a  
16 funding source. But it's something that you've  
17 identified in all the meetings as important, and  
18 it's something that we will continue to look at,  
19 and you've seen it evidenced on the screen. But  
20 we need the commitment and we need the funds to  
21 do it.

22 So it's possible, yes. But

1 we'll have to work on it.

2 MR. NELSON: All right. Esteemed  
3 State Representative Mary Flowers.

4 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Good  
5 evening, everyone. I'm State Representative  
6 Flowers.

7 And I just -- just for the  
8 sake of time, I want to elaborate on that  
9 question because there should be money for the  
10 upkeep of the State and Federal property as  
11 well. And so I think that is what people are  
12 concerned about in regards of the safety for the  
13 community.

14 So we are looking forward to  
15 participating. We are looking forward to  
16 working with you, but the most important thing,  
17 before 2014 comes we have to be safe. Our  
18 children must be safe and jobs must be created.

19 So in the interim, what we are  
20 looking forward to, if you need some help with  
21 someone cutting the grass and keeping up the  
22 upkeep and watching the viaduct, I have a couple

1 young men here. They're off my block. They  
2 help me take care of the block and, you know,  
3 just in the community period, you know.

4 So I just wanted to take this  
5 opportunity because I know funds are there for  
6 that, and I just wanted to reassure the  
7 community that we are going to do something for  
8 the safety of our children and that we are going  
9 to talk about access to jobs and the engineering  
10 programs that you started and that the young  
11 people have an opportunity to participate in.  
12 Thank you.

13 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. NELSON: You know, while I'm  
16 preparing to ask this very hard question, and  
17 quite a few, can you just kind of list the  
18 expert of panels, who we have represented here  
19 so that maybe that might trigger some additional  
20 questions. So who of the consortium are  
21 actually here?

22 MR. WILSON: Well, we can say myself

1 and Doug Knuth. I will use this, if you'd like.

2 Myself, Larry Wilson, and Doug  
3 Knuth from the project team. We also have other  
4 project team members. Gretchen Wahl, Nick  
5 Busalacchi, Leigh Dunston. Sorry, Leigh.

6 We have railroad  
7 representatives. Oh, I'm sorry.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Please raise  
9 your hand.

10 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Please  
11 have everyone -- please have everyone to come to  
12 the front and have a seat so the people in the  
13 community can know who you're talking about,  
14 please.

15 MS. TROTTER: Larry, I think it's  
16 about the partners, the CREATE partners'  
17 representatives.

18 MR. WILSON: Okay. So I would like to  
19 ask everybody who is here from the railroads to  
20 stand up, including Metra. Anyone from the City  
21 of Chicago here to stand up.

22 Okay. And so in addition to

1 our consulting project team and our IDOT  
2 representatives here, we do have railroad  
3 representatives, and we do have a city  
4 representative.

5 And if they're appropriate --  
6 I'm sorry. And we also have a representative  
7 from the organization that gives us a lot of our  
8 money who's in the back from the Federal Highway  
9 Administration, Bernardo Bustamante.

10 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Please  
11 join us up front. Thank you.

12 MR. NELSON: All right. I appreciate  
13 that. I think that that is extremely important,  
14 and I want to make a statement in front of a  
15 retired railroad worker from the community.

16 How often have we as a  
17 community had representation from the freight  
18 lines, from CSX, from whatever -- how often have  
19 we had a chance to really communicate with folks  
20 that are representing the rail lines. It's been  
21 very rare. In fact, I don't think I can ever  
22 remember that occurring.

1                   So this is an opportunity to  
2 ask those questions. So if you need another  
3 card, you need something to write with, please  
4 raise your hand and let's -- is that Ms. Smith?

5                   MS. SMITH: Yes.

6                   MR. NELSON: Hey.

7                   MS. SMITH: (Inaudible.)

8                   MR. NELSON: All right. And ask these  
9 questions.

10                  MS. SMITH: I want to know the  
11 railroad man.

12                  MR. NELSON: We have the railroads,  
13 Metra, CDOT, Chicago Department of  
14 Transportation, IDOT, Illinois Department of  
15 Transportation, and the Federal right here.

16                                So, very hard question here.  
17 It basically boils down to this. How many homes  
18 will be affected? "Affected" is a very general  
19 term. So let's drill that a little bit more.

20                                        How many homes, parcels,  
21 pieces of property will be acquired, will have  
22 to be acquired using eminent domain, and how

1 will the homeowners or owners of that property  
2 be compensated? Will it will be market rate or  
3 what is that process?

4 These are five cards and that  
5 five cards represents that question. Very hard  
6 question.

7 MR. WILSON: Doug is going to answer  
8 that question.

9 MR. KNUTH: Okay. The first question  
10 is -- the first part of that question was the  
11 number of homes that would be affected. And  
12 I'll tell you right now it's too early to tell  
13 you that because we are still looking at  
14 alternatives.

15 As you saw the exhibit today,  
16 it was all about what do we want to accomplish.  
17 Our next step is to evaluate the different ways  
18 of accomplishing that, and that's what we are  
19 going to be doing this summer is doing that,  
20 coming back to the community advisory groups,  
21 discussing those alternatives with them, again,  
22 this summer.

1                   And by the end of summer, we  
2 will be back here and we will be showing you  
3 alternatives for each of the areas where we are  
4 trying to address the problem. And we will do  
5 that. We will show you for each of those  
6 alternatives how many properties would be  
7 affected, if any. For most of the area, we  
8 don't anticipate taking any property. But there  
9 are some areas where we will probably be taking  
10 property.

11                   Where we do the process is  
12 governed by Federal law. It's called Uniform  
13 Relocation Act, and it gives the property owners  
14 and renters a lot of rights in the process. We  
15 are required to pay fair market value for any  
16 property that's acquired, and that's established  
17 by an independent evaluation. It also requires  
18 payment of relocation costs, costs of finding a  
19 new place, and other expenses.

20                   There is also provisions for  
21 renters. If you are renter in a property that's  
22 acquired, there is obviously costs in moving, in



1 finding a new place to rent and so on. So those  
2 costs are covered.

3 And if you would like to know  
4 more detail on that, we can get you some flyers  
5 that the Federal Government puts out about that.  
6 They are kind of wordy. I could bring them to  
7 the next meeting. If you let me know, I can get  
8 them to you ahead of them. But the goal is to  
9 make every -- people whole in the process.

10 MR. NELSON: All right. Was that a  
11 sufficient response to such a critical question?

12 Pardon me? I know a lot of  
13 these folks very well, and I think maybe seeing  
14 a map just to give an idea. I mean, if I live  
15 on, you know, 84th and Green, am I in an area  
16 that could potentially be affected? All right.  
17 Here's a map.

18 MR. KNUTH: And as I said, we are  
19 still in the process of developing alternatives  
20 and developing solutions. But that said, the  
21 one area, the one area that has the greatest  
22 possibility for impact to property owners is

1 around Hamilton Park. I'm going to switch hands  
2 because I'm left handed. I'm trying to do that  
3 with my right hand. It's in this area. We need  
4 to connect this Metra line to this Metra line.

5 And I know some of you some  
6 years ago already saw a map with a particular  
7 line on it and some of you I'm sure that line  
8 went right through your house. And since that  
9 time, the project has had a substantial change.

10 This is known as an  
11 Environmental Impact Statement. That's the  
12 highest level of thorough evaluation of impacts.  
13 It's also CSS, which requires us to do the  
14 highest level of communication and work with the  
15 community.

16 And in that process, we've  
17 stepped back and we are looking at a number of  
18 alternatives of which that alignment that was in  
19 there was probably one of them. But it's  
20 certainly not the only one and maybe not even  
21 the best one.

22 So we are evaluating impacts

1 to properties in the area, impacts to Hamilton  
2 Park and other issues to develop a series of  
3 alternatives that have a variety of different  
4 ways of solving the problems, and we'll come  
5 back to you with a variety of possible solutions  
6 and discuss those before a decision is made.

7 That's very different than,  
8 you know, five years ago. Here's a line on the  
9 map where we think we are going. It's a very  
10 different process from the way it was back then.

11 Does that get closer to making  
12 people happy?

13 MR. WILSON: Let me add something to  
14 that. I just want to make it real clear what it  
15 means to identify alternatives and then come  
16 back to you in a meeting.

17 If we are going to be doing  
18 something over here by Hamilton Park, then there  
19 is going to be a much bigger blown-up map, and  
20 it's going to have different lines on it. And  
21 along with those lines, it would show exactly  
22 where the alternatives would be going. There is

1 going to be information; the number of parcels  
2 affected, the number of single family homes  
3 affected, the number of multi-family homes  
4 affected, and the number of vacant properties  
5 needed, and we'll even try to distinguish  
6 between occupied and unoccupied.

7           And so the idea is there will  
8 be information about every one of these. They  
9 will all be available for public viewing before  
10 any particular approach is selected. That's how  
11 the Federal process works. We are required to  
12 follow the process. We think it's a good  
13 process anyway, so we are following it.

14           MR. KNUTH: We are very happy to be  
15 following this process. We are very happy to be  
16 following this process. This isn't something  
17 that is being forced on us by any stretch.

18           We are very happy to be in a  
19 process where we are discussing these issues and  
20 presenting the alternatives and hoping everyone  
21 understands the benefits and impacts of every  
22 decision that we make. So, we will be back with

1 that information and really hope to spend some  
2 much lively -- more lively discussions on those  
3 at that time.

4 MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. BUSTAMANTE: I would like to add.

6 Good evening, everybody. My  
7 name is Bernardo Bustamante. I represent the  
8 Federal Highway Administration on this project.  
9 We are one of the funding agencies for the  
10 project.

11 As was mentioned, the Federal  
12 Government is the agency that will approve this  
13 process. What I would like to add is that when  
14 we go to the different alternatives, part of  
15 that process, one of the alternatives will be  
16 a -- what we call a no bid action. Which means  
17 when we go through those alternatives, we look  
18 at the benefits. We look at the impacts from  
19 our source's point of view, environmental impact  
20 to the community, the community impact and then  
21 we see the problems that comes with different  
22 alternatives and then we make a determination

1 whether this project is viable or not.

2 So, I know you are concerned  
3 about, you know, right-of-way issues, property  
4 acquisition. That's something that we the  
5 agencies will take into account and then we will  
6 make a final determination on what are the  
7 different options of that. So that's why we  
8 have to go through the process to see if you  
9 will have a viable project or not. Your input  
10 is needed for that.

11 MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

12 Okay. Here's a question.  
13 This question really is about power, and what we  
14 as a community can do to affect this project.

15 In fact, did everyone sign in?  
16 Let me start with that. Has everyone signed in?  
17 Because once you've signed in, you will receive  
18 notices, notification, etc., etc., from the  
19 project team, and so you will stay clued in.

20 There is also -- I think we  
21 went over the website. If you don't have that  
22 access to the internet or don't have a computer

1 or utilization, I know some of you guys know who  
2 I'm talking to. I'll look on this side of the  
3 room. Please let me know but this access to  
4 this information is available. You have to stay  
5 committed.

6 And the next time we come,  
7 this room -- Pastor, this room should be packed.  
8 It really should. I mean this is -- this is  
9 ridiculous that, you know, only a third of this  
10 sanctuary is filled.

11 MS. TROTTER: I would just like to  
12 state that we started at 4 o'clock. Quite a  
13 number of people did come through and were  
14 participating in the open house from 4:00 to  
15 6:00. So I think that it probably would have  
16 been more people.

17 MR. NELSON: Gotcha.

18 Well, next time then the post  
19 cards will state something a lot less than come  
20 here at 4:00 and stay until 4:30. That's not a  
21 good way to market this public meeting. And so  
22 maybe a 6:00 to 7:30 or 5:30 to 7:30 would have

1       been much more appropriate. More people would  
2       have stayed and voiced their concerns.

3                       So here's the question on  
4       power. First, how would this project benefit  
5       me, the big me? How would this project benefit  
6       me?

7                       And Doug, you are going to  
8       have to step back or Larry. And would the  
9       project continue to -- let's say, will the  
10      project continue whether we like it or not?

11                      Guys, is that pretty fair?

12                      MR. WILSON: The first part of the  
13      question was how will this project benefit me  
14      and the second part is will it go on whether I  
15      like it or not.

16                      I'm going to tackle the first  
17      part of that one first. How does this project  
18      benefit me? Well, you know, the way it benefits  
19      each individual in a lot of ways depends on  
20      where you live in the project area and what kind  
21      of issues you have with the trains in that area.

22                      If you live near a curve where



1 you've got trains going around that curve and  
2 screeching, that's one thing. If you live in an  
3 area where kids have to run across the tracks to  
4 get to school because they can't get across the  
5 crossing, that's another thing. So everyone is  
6 affected a little bit differently.

7 And one of the fun things that  
8 has been the standard, perhaps, with a number of  
9 you and explained what that specifically means  
10 in that area, why the trains stop here and why  
11 they won't stop here anymore once we do this  
12 job.

13 That's part of it. That's  
14 part of what we are trying to accomplish.  
15 But -- so I can't answer it for each individual,  
16 but I can answer it for the community and the  
17 region in general.

18 Why are we doing CREATE? I  
19 think that was up there. We are doing it to  
20 reduce congestion for cars and trains. And when  
21 you -- No. 1 and that, therefore, has economic  
22 benefits locally and regionally and nationally.

1                   But when we have trains that  
2 have to stop a mile away and then start up and  
3 creep until the next time they have to stop,  
4 they are idling in our neighborhoods. They are  
5 idling in neighborhoods. They are noisy. They  
6 are -- they emit fumes and you don't want the  
7 train idling in your backyard, for No. 1.

8                   By keeping trains moving, what  
9 do we do. Trains don't emit as much pollution  
10 as when they are moving as when they are  
11 sitting. So that's one of the things that we  
12 get out of this. Train noise -- if we keep  
13 trains moving, the train is not in front of your  
14 house as long as we can sit in there. So we  
15 reduce the noise exposures for any individual  
16 train.

17                   What else? If you have access  
18 to commuter rail where you live, this service is  
19 going to be more reliable on the southwest  
20 service.

21                   And in general for the region,  
22 we are going to reduce train noise, and we are

1 going to reduce air pollution. There are areas  
2 where that's not true in a couple of those areas  
3 around this project, and I think I have  
4 explained that to a couple of people. But our  
5 analysis brings all that out. Now, that's a lot  
6 of technical stuff.

7 I have to bring up the jobs  
8 issue to even address the issue of what's in  
9 this for me. And let me say that we look at the  
10 jobs issue in two ways. One way is what would  
11 you normally expect when IDOT is going to come  
12 out and spend a lot of money that there should  
13 be employment opportunities with the  
14 construction project for individuals in the  
15 community. And one of the difficulties though  
16 is the construction for this project is four  
17 years out or more, depending on funds. That's  
18 not going to help anybody now. But one of the  
19 things we do is we have specialists on our team.  
20 Is Lance in here?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

22 MR. WILSON: Lance Foster works for

1     Ralph G. Moore and Associates.  They're a firm  
2     that are helping us.  They work for Jacobs as a  
3     sub-consultant.  They are helping us with a  
4     strategy and based on their proven experience of  
5     how we -- how we deal with the issue of  
6     construction jobs for the community.  And I can  
7     tell you that IDOT is committed to use every  
8     means that's available to us under federal law  
9     to help make that happen.

10                     But there's a little second  
11     part to the equation as well.  And that is --  
12     that is the fact that these railroads that go  
13     through our community are hiring.  Railroads  
14     have a lot of people that are near retirement  
15     age, and as they retire they have to be  
16     replaced.

17                     Now, railroad employment goes  
18     up and down with the economy, just like a lot of  
19     other businesses, and so what we saw in the  
20     recession is we saw the railroads weren't hiring  
21     during the recession.  But what we have now, as  
22     the economy picks up, there is some replacement

1 in positions, and there's some hirings for  
2 training. So what are we doing about that  
3 situation?

4 No. 1 strategy there is to try  
5 to make information about those jobs available;  
6 okay. And we want to try and do that on our  
7 project website -- on our program website,  
8 CREATEprogram.org. We will have more  
9 information about this. So that when a new job  
10 opening is available, you know, people can find  
11 out about it.

12 Secondly, we want to work with  
13 community organizations that help people find  
14 jobs to help them better understand the railroad  
15 industry, better understand how to access these  
16 jobs, and then beyond that, do whatever else we  
17 can to help not only the staff there, but also  
18 to help people who are clients at the  
19 organization understand what railroad couriers  
20 are about, you know.

21 And I won't go into that  
22 speech, but railroad jobs are well paying union

1 jobs, but they are hard work, and they mean a  
2 lot of time away from home. Different than  
3 trucking. But just odd hours that you get  
4 called and working in all weather conditions on  
5 24/7. So we are committed to working in both of  
6 those areas and that's also how we expect the  
7 community to benefit.

8 That's only half the question.  
9 All right, Doug? What was the other half again?

10 MR. KNUTH: Whether the project will  
11 proceed whether we want it or not.

12 MR. WILSON: Doug wants to say  
13 something before I answer that question.

14 MR. KNUTH: One of the things that is  
15 now -- this is now part of the purpose and need  
16 is the condition of the local viaducts. This is  
17 a transportation project. And the impetus of  
18 the project was to fix the railroad traffic, the  
19 congestion on the railroad.

20 And as we started talking to  
21 the community and the community leaders and  
22 community members, we were told and -- about the

1 condition of the viaducts; that drainage is bad.

2 Anyone who came under one of  
3 the viaducts this afternoon was well aware of  
4 that; as there was standing water under almost  
5 all of them that wasn't draining very well, that  
6 the lighting was bad. The concrete falls off  
7 and so on. And that is also a transportation  
8 area -- issue. And that's a community  
9 transportation issue.

10 Because these viaducts are  
11 restricting and prohibiting local mobility, the  
12 ability to get around, the ability to safely  
13 walk and drive underneath the viaducts and get  
14 around the community.

15 And so that is now also part  
16 of the purpose and need of the project and that  
17 came from community input. Based on that  
18 community input, we went out and inspected the  
19 viaduct and said, you know, they're right. The  
20 lighting is bad. The drainage is bad. The  
21 sidewalks are bad. And so we have added that to  
22 the project.

1                   And that's a great example of  
2                   how community input makes the project better and  
3                   provides better benefits to the community.

4                   MR. WILSON: Yeah. Thank you for  
5                   mentioning the viaducts. That's a big deal and  
6                   I can't add anything to what Doug has said about  
7                   that.

8                   To the second part of the  
9                   question, are we going to do it anyway whether  
10                  or not you like it? Well, that's going to be  
11                  different for every individual also. But the  
12                  process is designed this way. We are going to  
13                  have numerous meetings like this, as we move  
14                  through the process.

15                  The next one is about the  
16                  alternatives for you to get a view in detail so  
17                  that you can see where it's going, how it  
18                  affects your home, your neighbor's home or  
19                  whatever. And then we have meetings beyond that  
20                  where as part of the prescribed process for us  
21                  is to get all the input from the community that  
22                  we can. And that is defined with the work that



1 the engineers have done, and it's evaluated  
2 against the purpose of the project and the need  
3 of the project that is then identified at the  
4 outset. And that's part of the reason for this  
5 meeting today is to make sure we get that right.

6 Ultimately, we can't make  
7 everybody happy. You know, if there's a need to  
8 connect the southwest service to the Rock  
9 Island, some individuals are and property owners  
10 will suffer. But the system itself is to make  
11 sure people are justly compensated for that.  
12 Sometimes it falls short, but that's the intent,  
13 and it's something that people at IDOT take very  
14 seriously and work very hard at. Not everyone  
15 is going to be happy.

16 So yeah, the answer is,  
17 depending on who you are and where you live and  
18 what's happening on the project, it may go on  
19 without you being happy about it.

20 But the good news about the  
21 way we are doing this today is everybody has a  
22 chance to be heard. It's one thing to have

1 something done that hurts you where you never  
2 even knew about it until it happened. This  
3 process is set up so that everybody has a chance  
4 to be heard and considered in the process.  
5 That's pretty much the answer I've got.

6 Doug, you want to comment on  
7 this as well?

8 MR. KNUTH: As Bernardo mentioned, one  
9 of the possible outcomes of a study like this is  
10 do nothing. And that happens when -- at the end  
11 of all our studies, we look at the benefits of  
12 doing the project and the impacts and costs of  
13 doing the project. And if those impacts aren't  
14 worth the cost to the community and to the  
15 environment, you know, then it's pretty hard to  
16 justify going ahead with it and that's what this  
17 process is about.

18 It's an environmental impact  
19 statement. We weigh those benefits and the  
20 impacts and the costs. And in the end it's the  
21 Federal Highway Department that makes the ruling  
22 as to whether or not we've done something we're

1 proposing to do something worthwhile. And if  
2 it's not worthwhile, then the answer is do  
3 nothing. So that's always a possibility and it  
4 does happen. There are projects that go through  
5 this, and it's decided that it's not worth it.  
6 And a do nothing is the end result.

7 We hope -- you know, we hope  
8 to be able to do a good enough job of minimizing  
9 the costs and minimizing the impact so that we  
10 don't get there. That's our process is to try  
11 to do the minimum harm, the minimum impacts  
12 to anyone that we can in order to make the  
13 project viable. But it's always a possibility  
14 that we end up that it's not worth it.

15 MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

16 All right. As we approach 15  
17 minutes before we conclude, I think we are going  
18 to need to speed up the responses, as we get  
19 more questions asked.

20 Now, this is a question to the  
21 railroads. How can each community get help in  
22 maintaining railroad property? For example,

1 overgrowth, beautification, viaducts, etc.

2 Coming this way. Put you on  
3 the spot.

4 MR. CLARK: Well, the big thing that  
5 the railroads need to know is that there is a  
6 problem. I mean, when we go out and maintain  
7 our tracks and look at things, we see it from  
8 what's on the track. We don't always drive  
9 through the community. So we don't always see  
10 everything that you see through the same eyes  
11 that you do. So we are looking out to make the  
12 tracks safe to ensure that we don't have a  
13 problem in your neighborhood and those kinds of  
14 things. So we need your help to understand  
15 where the problems are.

16 Now, my company -- I'm CSX.  
17 Our tracks run north/south through the western  
18 edge of this project. We have ways of notifying  
19 the right people, and there is ways that the  
20 public can notify us. One way is to go to our  
21 website, which would be [www.CSX.com](http://www.CSX.com) and there is  
22 forms on there that you can tell CSX there's a

1 problem.

2 The other railroads are  
3 represented in this area. I'm sure they have  
4 similar websites, although I've not personally  
5 looked for them, but would encourage you to do  
6 that.

7 So that's really the best and  
8 quickest way to get the answers or your comments  
9 on the type of maintenance sites that you see  
10 that we need to address.

11 MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. KNUTH: One suggestion that I  
13 thought -- one suggestion which I heard tonight,  
14 which I thought was an excellent suggestion,  
15 that we could help that process by putting on  
16 our website a link to those railroad websites.  
17 So you can go to the 75th CIP website and be  
18 able to find how you contact the railroad to  
19 give them that information. That's something  
20 that we can do to help the process, and I think  
21 it's a great idea.

22 MR. NELSON: Okay. A couple questions

1 around structural issues and then this question  
2 around noise. Will -- how will the noise --  
3 let's see.

4 You indicated about limiting  
5 the noise. So how will you keep the noise down  
6 when the trains will -- when the trains continue  
7 to go through. Will there be noise barriers?

8 And simultaneously, many of  
9 the homes have suffered structural damage,  
10 foundations moving over the years that are  
11 adjacent to the train lines. Are there funds  
12 available -- can there be funds available to  
13 assist those residents?

14 MR. WILSON: All right. I'm going to  
15 at least address the first part of that  
16 question. And Doug will -- I know will step in  
17 with additional information as needed, but I  
18 will be brief.

19 For any project like this, we  
20 have experts who go out and take measurements in  
21 the neighborhood to determine what the  
22 background noise level is. And then we take

1 information about what trains are running now,  
2 what trains we think might be running in the  
3 future, based on an estimated growth rate, and  
4 then we run those models to see how often trains  
5 are going by certain areas at what speed and how  
6 long those trains are. And then from those  
7 spots, then the model figures for the areas  
8 around it.

9                   And the results of that  
10 modeling -- there's a three-step analysis -- are  
11 what helps IDOT and the Federal Highway  
12 Administration to determine if there is a  
13 serious noise -- if there's a noise impact,  
14 particularly a severe noise impact, and whether  
15 or not -- whether or not it's feasible to make a  
16 significant impact on it and whether or not it's  
17 feasible -- whether it's cost effective to do  
18 so. That's how our process works. And if the  
19 process shows that all those things are met,  
20 then a sound wall would be justified.

21                   And at that point there's a  
22 new process that's comes into place to allow the

1 community to provide input into that decision.  
2 We do expect that will be -- before that comes  
3 up on this job, we expect that that will be --  
4 that will be part of the process. And that's  
5 pretty much how we do it.

6 Now, there was a piece of the  
7 question about why will the project make less  
8 noise from trains. Well, we can't change how  
9 much noise a locomotive makes, but we can change  
10 how long it's in front of your house. So what I  
11 was trying to say is that, if the -- if a train  
12 is idling, whatever noise it's making, it stays  
13 there and it stays there and it stays there.  
14 Whereas, if we eliminate bottlenecks, just like  
15 with cars, the trains keep moving, then those  
16 noises don't spend as long in front of any given  
17 location.

18 So when I said reducing noise,  
19 I meant that we can't -- basically can't reduce  
20 the noise at the source. We can reduce the  
21 duration of it. And there could also be time of  
22 day impacts too out of this project.



1 Yes, Representative Flowers.

2 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Just  
3 like with the airport --

4 MR. WILSON: Yes.

5 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: -- the  
6 reduction of the noise and the funds that was  
7 given by the Feds --

8 MR. WILSON: Yes.

9 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: -- is  
10 there a program like that to help these  
11 homeowners?

12 And the second part of the  
13 question was the structure --

14 MR. WILSON: Yeah, I haven't gotten to  
15 that yet, by the way.

16 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: -- of  
17 the homes and are there funds for the homes that  
18 have already have had their structure damaged  
19 and in the future.

20 MR. WILSON: Okay. Right now the  
21 rules -- according to the rules, a sound wall is  
22 what we've got. It's not part of -- it's not

1 part of what's allowed with Federal funds to  
2 insulate individual homes against noise. And so  
3 the sound wall is really the main vehicle that  
4 is used.

5 Now, if there is some  
6 flexibility in that, I'm not aware of it, but if  
7 there is, we'll find it. So a sound wall,  
8 again, when they decide whether or not to build  
9 it, they look at how much of the noise will it  
10 take away and how much would it cost to build  
11 it. And do the residents want it because  
12 sometimes there's a very large wall and not  
13 many -- and there may be many reasons why you  
14 don't want it. But those are the basic factors  
15 that are taken into account.

16 Am I leaving anything out?

17 MR. KNUTH: No. The other part of the  
18 noise is when we come back at future meetings,  
19 we will show you the results of that noise  
20 study, and where noise will be increased, and  
21 where it will be decreased, and where walls  
22 would be recommended, and where other solutions

1 would be recommended. So we will share all of  
2 that with you.

3 MR. WILSON: That's correct.

4 Okay. In terms of structural  
5 damage to the homes, there is no current program  
6 available to provide funds for damages occurred  
7 in the past. Could something like that be done?  
8 I think anything is possible. But there is no  
9 current program to do that. So that's something  
10 that's going to require more study.

11 It's been brought to our  
12 attention. We understand the severity of the  
13 problem, but at this point we have no vehicle to  
14 do that for damage that has already been  
15 incurred by homes because it's not as a result  
16 of this project.

17 Now, correct me if I'm wrong,  
18 but during construction if there are specific  
19 impacts from construction to homes, that's a  
20 little different story, right, Doug?

21 MR. KNUTH: Yes. Yes. There is kind  
22 of two kinds of vibration issues that we can

1 develop -- we can address in the project. One  
2 is by noise vibration from construction and we  
3 can -- we certainly try to do construction  
4 techniques that minimize that and reduce the  
5 amount of noise and reduce the amount of  
6 vibration, especially at night. So that's part  
7 of our task is to address that.

8 We also need to address them  
9 in the going forward process. We've also  
10 measured vibrations throughout the community  
11 from passing trains. We did -- we had vibration  
12 experts come in from New York because they were  
13 the best in the country with railroad vibration  
14 and measured vibrations around the area. They  
15 will also analyze what's there now versus what's  
16 proposed. Tell us where we need to do things to  
17 reduce vibration in our design and we can in  
18 our -- the new things we build take measures to  
19 reduce the amount of vibration.

20 We can put foam pads in under  
21 the tracks on bridges to reduce the amount of  
22 vibration that comes through the place and so

1 on. We have those techniques now that weren't  
2 there a hundred years ago when these bridges  
3 were built in order to reduce some of that  
4 vibration, and we will certainly apply those to  
5 reduce the vibration and any damage.

6 MR. WILSON: That's basically all I  
7 have to say about the matter. I have to answer  
8 the question partly in the interest of time.

9 MR. NELSON: All right. Here's a real  
10 quick one. In what areas will there be possible  
11 water system or sewer impacts?

12 MR. KNUTH: We don't anticipate many.  
13 We did an analysis of all the existing utilities  
14 crossing the railroads, and for most of the  
15 areas the utilities don't cross under our  
16 corridor. They go from the corridor both  
17 directions. So we don't have -- we don't have  
18 great big sewer lines or water lines under our  
19 railroad, for the most part. That was a very  
20 pleasant finding because --

21 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: What  
22 causes the flooding underneath viaducts?

1           MR. KNUTH: There is problems with  
2 flooding under the viaducts. Clearly the water  
3 doesn't drain away and we need some better  
4 drains under the viaduct to help that water  
5 drain away. That's one of the things that's  
6 clearly noted. And as I said, for any of us who  
7 are uncertain about it, it's very clear today.

8           We also know that there are  
9 areas where we are going to do construction that  
10 we will need to address drainage from the  
11 railroad, too. In particular, we know the area  
12 around Forest Hill has some drainage problems,  
13 and we are looking at ways to put in some new  
14 drainage from that area to reduce runoff coming  
15 out of this area and into the community. So we  
16 have heard about that.

17           Where we build new bridges, we  
18 will have to provide drainage there and do --  
19 and we have to get City of Chicago approval for  
20 anything we do; city of Chicago drainage  
21 approval. They are very strict. Much stricter  
22 than anywhere else we work. So that's a good

1 thing for you.

2 We certainly know we have  
3 problems under the viaducts. If there are other  
4 areas where there is current drainage problem  
5 where in today's storm you had water running off  
6 the railroads, I need to know that. It's much  
7 easier for me to address this if someone tells  
8 me about it. So please let us know.

9 MR. NELSON: Okay. Thank you.

10 It's a question about who to  
11 contact about poor conditions in viaducts, and  
12 there is some specific locations noted here. So  
13 if a resident here has a specific location, who  
14 should they notify? An Alderman's office?  
15 What's the response? 311? What is it?

16 MR. WILSON: Certainly 311 because it  
17 could be a problem with the City facility. Joe  
18 Alonzo is here. I don't know if he wants to  
19 address that any further.

20 MR. ALONZO: I could.

21 MR. WILSON: Joe Alonzo from the  
22 Chicago Department of Transportation.

1           MR. ALONZO: Hi. I'm Joe Alonzo. I  
2 represent the Chicago Department of  
3 Transportation.

4           And one thing that we've done  
5 as part of this project is that we have a  
6 stimulus package that we were given and awarded  
7 \$5 million where we identified 14 viaducts on  
8 the south and southwest sides of the City of  
9 Chicago to make improvements for sidewalk  
10 improvements, curb and gutter improvements,  
11 roadway improvements. And we are hoping to  
12 begin those projects this summer. And that's  
13 actually a program that's funded by the Federal  
14 Highway Administration as well.

15           Other viaducts that obviously  
16 still need improvement, you can give my office a  
17 call. We make interface with the railroads  
18 who -- like David Clark mentioned from CSX, they  
19 don't know if there is a problem. We somehow  
20 are facilitating that as well. So when we get  
21 calls from the Alderman's office or other  
22 elected official's office or through 311



1 inquiries, we address it by either writing  
2 letters or making calls to the railroads. And  
3 once they are given notification, they go out  
4 and make an assessment themselves and go and  
5 make the improvement, if needed.

6 But, again, if you want the  
7 contact information, I will provide that, but  
8 you can give my office a call or myself a call  
9 and I can definitely help.

10 RESPONSE: What's your number?

11 MR. WILSON: 311, right?

12 MR. ALONZO: Area code 312-744-1731.

13 RESPONSE: Say it again.

14 MR. ALONZO: 312-744-1731.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Spell your  
16 name, please.

17 MR. ALONZO: Joe, J-o-e. The last  
18 name is spelled A-l-o-n-z-o. The.

19 MR. WILSON: I've got one more  
20 question for Joe. Those 14 viaducts, aren't a  
21 couple of them in this area?

22 MR. ALONZO: Yes.

1 MR. WILSON: What are they?

2 MR. ALONZO: There are two locations  
3 along 75th Street on Morgan is one location and  
4 Peoria is the second location. So you should be  
5 seeing some work being done there this summer to  
6 make improvements at those two locations.

7 MR. NELSON: All right. So we have a  
8 street team of folks right here and this street  
9 team actually goes and they go to 71st between  
10 Stewart and Eggleston or 79th or 80th near Lowe.  
11 How does the street team alert CDOT or whomever  
12 of additional viaducts that need to be placed on  
13 that list?

14 MR. ALONZO: Well, you know, with this  
15 program, there's limited funds that the Federal  
16 Highway administered. There's another actual  
17 application process where we are looking to  
18 identify locations where we can make  
19 improvements and this is all federal funds. I  
20 think the name of the game for any project is  
21 the fact you need to provide funds. And  
22 luckily, the Obama Administration has been able

1 to provide some of these funds to make some of  
2 these improvements.

3 But in terms of identifying  
4 further locations, by all means give us a call.  
5 But in terms of identifying funding, I think  
6 that's more critical because there's always  
7 going to be candidates for improvements, and we  
8 can definitely always use the funds to make  
9 improvements all over the City of Chicago with  
10 the improvements of the viaducts.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was the \$5  
12 million just for those viaducts?

13 MR. ALONZO: No. The \$5 million is  
14 for the 14 viaducts that were selected as  
15 candidates.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And how were  
17 they selected? Based on what criteria?

18 MR. ALONZO: Well, there was some  
19 inspectors that went out and they looked at  
20 provisional inspections, looking it delapidated  
21 sidewalks, broken sidewalks, potholes, you know,  
22 broken streets, and also curbs and gutters that

1 weren't functioning. Like, for example, with  
2 drainage issues, if there is some standing water  
3 that is remaining on the street, we identified  
4 it.

5                   And you know this is  
6 essentially by ward and actually identified it  
7 through these projects or through the CREATE  
8 Program through the corridor that were actually  
9 doing these projects. We wanted to make sure  
10 that it was dispersed equally amongst different  
11 wards where the CREATE Program is doing  
12 projects.

13                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So did they  
14 look at all the viaducts in this area when they  
15 determined those 14?

16                   MR. NELSON: Doug.

17                   MR. KNUTH: There is really kind of  
18 two different tracts here. Maybe tracts wasn't  
19 the right word.

20                   But what is -- if something is  
21 wrong now and it's a maintenance item that needs  
22 to be fixed, the lights are out at Halsted. If

1 that's the case, 311, calling Aldermen, call  
2 Joe, get maintenance people out to fix it.  
3 That's step one.

4 Now, you're also welcome to  
5 let us know about problems on the project. You  
6 can go to the CREATE website, and you can send  
7 emails. You can send letters to say what  
8 address on the comment forms and let us know  
9 about the problems.

10 Now, of course, the timeline  
11 is the problem there. Because this project is  
12 going to be, you know, four or five years before  
13 it starts addressing any of those things. But  
14 if it's a really big problem that needs to be  
15 addressed in a big way, we can do that as part  
16 of the project.

17 But if it's a light that needs  
18 to get repaired or a drain that needs to get,  
19 unplugged, four or five years is not a very good  
20 solution for that. That needs to happen sooner  
21 and that needs to go through the City, so...

22 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: I don't

1 think we would want you to wait. Or we are not  
2 going to wait four or five years to get it done.  
3 But if the City or someone don't call us back  
4 soon enough, we'll just call you, and maybe you  
5 can push them on a little faster to make sure  
6 that drain is unplugged or the lights are on.

7 MR. KNUTH: We certainly pass that  
8 information on to the City, and I have already  
9 done so.

10 MR. NELSON: All right. Real quick.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The main  
12 portion of this particular viaduct is falling  
13 concrete and that's very dangerous.

14 MR. NELSON: So this is clear. This  
15 is really clear to me that probably none of  
16 these experts has tried to go from Halsted to  
17 Vincennes on 80th Street or 81st Street. Okay.  
18 You need to do that today. It's been like that  
19 since we were little. Right, Terry? All right.  
20 But hang on.

21 So here's the question. I  
22 have to try to move along and, you know, we have

1 more questions, but I think we will have to  
2 figure out a way to kind of keep this moving.

3 Will the viaducts be repaired  
4 prior to the final decision to proceed with --  
5 wait a minute. Will the viaduct be repaired  
6 prior to the final decision to proceed with the  
7 project as made?

8 MR. WILSON: If the viaducts are going  
9 to be repaired as part of the project, then  
10 obviously we can't do it before that. But if we  
11 can find other fund sources and through the new  
12 evidence of communication that have been  
13 suggested, hopefully, some of this can be  
14 addressed.

15 I do want to go back and  
16 mention the falling concrete issue. This  
17 becomes a little bit of a different animal.  
18 Because it's important that the -- that the  
19 railroad, excuse me, that the railroad who owns  
20 that viaduct knows that there is a danger to the  
21 public from chunks of concrete falling off their  
22 viaduct.

1                   Now in that case then, let the  
2 project team know through the project website or  
3 the CREATE website about the danger to the  
4 public, you know, from falling concrete.  
5 Something that needs to go to the railroads like  
6 that and we will pass it along.

7                   I didn't answer your whole  
8 question, I don't think.

9                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will the  
10 viaducts be repaired?

11                  MR. WILSON: Okay. I guess I did.

12                  MR. NELSON: I have some gold. Some  
13 information here that is worth the price of  
14 gold.

15                   I have phone numbers for the  
16 railroad companies, so if you have a pencil and  
17 your paper. And I would also like some clarity  
18 what's the demarcation point. Where does the --  
19 where is the railroad company responsible and  
20 where is the city responsible?

21                   All right. So for the folks  
22 in the west, in section CSX, the CSX, 877-TELL,



1 T-E-L-L, CSX. Oh, that's simple. 877-TELL-CSX.

2 MR. CLARK: If you dial 800, you'll  
3 get something very different. You don't want to  
4 dial 800.

5 MR. NELSON: 877-TELL-CSX. So down  
6 79th and Hamilton, basically. Hamilton, that's  
7 the CSX. On the way to Western.

8 The Norfolk Southern Railroad,  
9 800-453-2350. 800-453-2350.

10 The UP, the Union Pacific.  
11 That was yours. Right, Betty? All right. The  
12 Union Pacific, 312-777-2000. That's the Union  
13 Pacific.

14 And then my dear friend from  
15 Metra. You want to cough up the phone number,  
16 Tanya, for Metra. Oh, Glenn.

17 MR. PETERS: Glenn Peters with Metra.

18 I would like to say that I  
19 think the process works a lot better if  
20 everything is funneled through CDOT. That's the  
21 way we get complaints about any maintenance  
22 issues on our bridges. CDOT sends me an email.

1 And we send -- we have an emergency bridge  
2 repair contractor that goes out and fixes it as  
3 it comes into CDOT.

4 I think the process works.  
5 They determine who the railroad that needs to be  
6 contacted. You don't have to remember all of  
7 these numbers, and that's the way we typically  
8 have received information on repair issues about  
9 bridges and viaducts.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: May we have  
11 your contact number anyway?

12 MR. NELSON: They want your number  
13 anyway.

14 MR. PETERS: My number is  
15 312-322-6631.

16 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: So  
17 you're telling everyone that they should call  
18 CDOT first?

19 MR. PETERS: Well, CDOT determines  
20 whose railroad it is and who to call. And then  
21 CDOT, if it's a Metra railroad issue, they call  
22 me and I take care of it with our bridge repair.

1 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Okay.  
2 Just so you will know just from the average  
3 layperson that calls, CDOT have said you need to  
4 call Metra. Or Metra had said you need to call  
5 Union Pacific or someone else.

6 MR. PETERS: And that's why I'm trying  
7 to take that whole step out. Because when you  
8 are standing down below --

9 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: I agree  
10 with you.

11 But my point to you is that  
12 when my constituents have called my office, they  
13 have told me that they've called CDOT or they've  
14 called Metra or they've called somebody else.  
15 They are always being given the runaround. So  
16 it's okay that we know these numbers, and it's  
17 okay that we have your number, and it's okay  
18 that we have CDOT's number. Because with all  
19 these numbers, we want to get it right. That's  
20 the point.

21 MR. NELSON: And you're in a room full  
22 of very active, very strong community leaders

1 and block club representatives.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And what is  
3 CDOT's number?

4 MR. NELSON: What is CDOT's number?

5 MR. ALONZO: Area code 312-744-1731.  
6 More than happy to help.

7 MR. NELSON: Here we are. I was  
8 waiting on Tanya. All right.

9 MS. COHN: Hi. I'm Tanya Cohn with  
10 Metra. Metra's main number is 312-322-6900.  
11 And also, if there's an emergency situation,  
12 Metra's police number is -- and it's a 24 hour  
13 emergency number. 312-322-2800. Thank you.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tanya Comb?

15 MR. NELSON: Tanya Cohn.

16 MS. COHN: Tanya Cohn, C-o-h-n.  
17 Tanya, T-a-n-y-a, Cohn, C-o-h-n.

18 And please feel free to call  
19 me. My number is 312-322-6752.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

21 MS. COHN: You're welcome.

22 MR. NELSON: Okay.

1                   And I do want to close up and,  
2 unfortunately, I know we have a few -- we've got  
3 several more questions. And before I turn  
4 over -- turn the mic over, because I do want  
5 everyone to kind of hear -- get to -- try to get  
6 a little clarity. Where does the railroad  
7 company's responsibility begin at the viaducts  
8 and on the land and where does the City's  
9 responsibility? That way when they call  
10 Alderman Thomas, Alderman Brookins, Alderman  
11 Lane, State Rep Flowers, depending whoever it  
12 is, we will be more informed.

13                   All right. So I don't know  
14 who wants to step up and try to address that.

15                   And as I -- I want to hear  
16 from the railroad. As he's coming up here, the  
17 next meeting, the next public meeting will be in  
18 the fall, September or October. I want everyone  
19 to promise me to bring at least two additional  
20 people here with them. Can I have that promise?

21                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I found out  
22 about it from one of the neighbors with a post

1 card that was in our mailbox. I agree with you,  
2 but if people don't know...

3 And the second thing you said  
4 that you keep giving out computer -- some people  
5 not computer literate.

6 MR. NELSON: Right. I promise not to  
7 look at anybody. You all know I have been --  
8 I'm not going to look at any names.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It doesn't  
10 matter that --

11 MR. NELSON: You're right. I  
12 understand that. Right. Exactly right.

13 So we have about 60 or so  
14 people here. If everyone brings three or four  
15 individuals, we are at 180, 240 people plus.  
16 All right. So we are -- we will be the word  
17 of -- the words of mouths and you will expect  
18 more notification from the project CREATE team  
19 and from your local elected officials.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will we have  
21 FAQ's, frequently asked questions, like the  
22 questions that were here tonight posted on the

1 website? I'm asking IDOT.

2 MS. TROTTER: Well, I just wanted to  
3 let you know how we marketed this or advertised  
4 for this public meeting. It was through the  
5 Sun-Times, through the local newspapers, the  
6 Defender, the Southwest Citizen, Crusader, I  
7 believe, and it was also posted at your  
8 Aldermen's offices. And let's see. It was at  
9 the libraries.

10 MS. COHN: Posters along the southwest  
11 line.

12 MS. TROTTER: It was posters along the  
13 Metra lines. And let's not forget it was sent  
14 to 2,000 members that surrounded the  
15 community -- in the community surrounding the  
16 project area. It was mailed to them directly.

17 So not to say that you can  
18 always do better, but we did try to cover all  
19 the bases, just so that you know.

20 MR. WILSON: And in addition, as  
21 Carlos said, if you signed in tonight, you will  
22 be notified of everything from here on out.

1                   We'll try to answer the  
2 question about the viaduct responsibility. It's  
3 not always real clear, but the roadway  
4 underneath there is generally the responsibility  
5 of whichever -- whoever owns the road, the State  
6 or the City.

7                   UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry. Can  
8 you repeat that for me?

9                   MR. WILSON: I'm sorry. The road  
10 underneath the viaduct is not the railroad's  
11 responsibility. It's the responsibility of  
12 the -- of whoever owns the road. If it's a  
13 Chicago Road or a State road, they are the ones  
14 responsible for what's on the road. Or a  
15 County. There are County roads too, although  
16 not here in the City of Chicago. Oh, there are  
17 some in the City of Chicago.

18                   And then on the other hand, if  
19 there is concrete falling from the bridge deck  
20 onto the pavement, that's definitely the  
21 railroad's responsibility because it's their  
22 bridge. But in most cases, that's true. In



1 between it depends. But that's why you have all  
2 these numbers to get to the bottom of the  
3 problem.

4 Anybody else want to add to  
5 that?

6 MR. ALONZO: In addition to the roads  
7 that Larry mentioned, sidewalk and curb and  
8 gutter would also be a public agency  
9 responsibility, whether it would be the City,  
10 State or County.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And lighting?

12 MR. ALONZO: And the lighting actually  
13 is an interesting arrangement between the City  
14 of Chicago and the railroads, where the City of  
15 Chicago usually maintains it but with the shared  
16 cost with the railroad.

17 In addition to the --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The drainage at  
19 75th at the viaduct, we get standing water. We  
20 have to put salt down in the winter because it  
21 freezes up on the southbound lanes.

22 MR. ALONZO: That's a good question

1 because we get issues like that all the time.

2 It depends on where the source  
3 of the water is coming from, if it's something  
4 from rain water that is just backed up in the  
5 sewer, that would be the City's responsibility.  
6 But if it's water coming from the abutment  
7 walls, that is actually something that's coming  
8 from the railroad side of the property, and  
9 that's something that we interface with the  
10 railroads to try to come to an agreement or some  
11 solution to try to address that water source.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've been  
13 addressing it like for years. I mean, this is  
14 summer and winter the water is running from, I  
15 guess, the railroad.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We are trying  
17 to say it takes you guys a while. We just  
18 trying to see who's responsible.

19 MR. NELSON: Let's get the exact  
20 location. Obviously, this is a very convoluted  
21 arrangement all over our community. I mean,  
22 Halsted is a State road, so that we go through

1 the State. So I mean, I guarantee at the end of  
2 this session we are going -- we'll probably be  
3 the experts addressing this issue.

4 But the reason -- we've got  
5 all of the numbers, all of the phone numbers,  
6 and I recommend that you continue to call and  
7 call. And when you call, you point the finger,  
8 and you keep calling until you get the response  
9 that is sufficient for you.

10 That 75th Street location,  
11 please -- what is the exact address?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 75th and Racine  
13 right beside the library.

14 MR. NELSON: Okay. 75th and Racine.  
15 Okay.

16 Jakita, you want to close us  
17 out and talk about next steps.

18 MS. TROTTER: Well, I will close us  
19 out. Well, actually, in closing, it's just to  
20 thank everyone for coming, participating and,  
21 you know, you did exactly what we wanted you to  
22 do and that was to hear your comments, you know.

1                   You spoke out. We heard it.  
2                   It's recorded. You have multiple ways of  
3                   submitting comments to us. You know, you could  
4                   mail it. There is a court reporter. You could  
5                   drop it in the comment box. You can go, you  
6                   know, to our websites on the comment sheet.  
7                   Email us. Call us.

8                   So there's a lot of ways to  
9                   contact us to, you know, to get heard. But,  
10                  again, I want to thank Keevin Woods,  
11                  Representative Flowers, and all of you and, of  
12                  course, the partners, the partners in  
13                  particular, for your participation in tonight's  
14                  public meeting. And this is the first of more  
15                  to come. I hope you have a good evening and a  
16                  wonderful weekend.

17                  And here's Representative  
18                  Flowers.

19                  STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Thank  
20                  you, Jakita.

21                  And I would like to take this  
22                  opportunity to thank the Reverend, Reverend

1 Thomas and thank IDOT and the railroad and  
2 everyone else for participating.

3 But I just want to say this to  
4 all of our visitors here tonight. You've come  
5 to the community because you want to know -- you  
6 want to sell us CREATE, and we want to buy  
7 CREATE because this is our home. We want a safe  
8 environment in order to live and our children to  
9 grow up in. We should not have to call you and  
10 tell you that your property is falling apart.

11 If you have an impact study  
12 that you're paying someone to know the impact of  
13 what CREATE is going to do for the community and  
14 find out what needs to be done, that means  
15 someone should have come through the community.  
16 They should have been under the viaducts. They  
17 should know. You should be telling us we know  
18 about this viaduct by 83rd Street. We know  
19 about the viaduct on 76th Street. We know about  
20 the standing water. We know about the  
21 electrical problems. We know about the falling  
22 bricks.

1                   This is what we have been  
2 living with for years. That's the reason why,  
3 sir, it's so important that we have everyone's  
4 number. Because we've called and we've called  
5 and we've called.

6                   And I must say that I'm very  
7 impressed that when my husband then turned on  
8 74th Street here, I was impressed to know that  
9 the grass was cut and we have new cement and the  
10 viaduct was clean. Because this viaduct here  
11 has been a problem for years.

12                   So, we want to work with you.  
13 We look forward to working with you  
14 continuously, but as taxpayers we would like to  
15 know that you are going to do your part.

16                   Yes, the room could be filled.  
17 But some of us have to go that extra mile to do  
18 extra things to work extra jobs in order to make  
19 ends meet. But in the meantime, you know what  
20 needs to be done because you are particularly  
21 yourself here tonight and you know you have a  
22 map here. You know exactly where your jobs

1 sites are, what needs to be corrected.

2 So can you promise us before  
3 the fall that you would send someone, Metra,  
4 Union Pacific, CDOT, the Feds, all of you,  
5 please send one -- send someone to the areas  
6 that you know that belongs to you, not us. We  
7 don't know. But you know that's yours and  
8 please correct it.

9 So would you make that promise  
10 to us? And then if you make us a promise, then  
11 we will make you a promise that we will have a  
12 packed house. So then you will be able to tell  
13 us about all of the things that you have done  
14 for us later with our tax dollars. Is that fair  
15 enough?

16 MR. WILSON: Yes.

17 STATE REPRESENTATIVE FLOWERS: Thank  
18 you very much and I appreciate it.

19

20 (WHICH WERE ALL THE PROCEEDINGS HAD  
21 IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER.)

22

1       STATE OF ILLINOIS    )  
                                  )  
2       COUNTY OF C O O K    )

3  
4  
5                            I, DONNA T. WADLINGTON, a  
6       Certified Shorthand Reporter, doing business in  
7       the County of Cook and State of Illinois, do  
8       hereby certify that I reported in machine  
9       shorthand the proceedings in the above entitled  
10      cause.

11                           I further certify that the  
12      foregoing is a true and correct transcript of  
13      said proceedings as appears from the  
14      stenographic notes so taken and transcribed by  
15      me this 16th day of June, 2011.

16  
17  
18                            \_\_\_\_\_  
19                            DONNA T. WADLINGTON  
20                            CSR #084-02443  
21  
22



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